

**REMARKS**

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed on October 14, 2005. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3-11, 15-22, 24-28 and 32-40 will be pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 22, and 24 are amended herein. Claims 2, 12-14, 23 and 29-31 have been cancelled. Claims 41-54 have been withdrawn.

Claims 1-11, 15-20, 22-28, 32-36, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ni (US 2002/0122387).

Claims 12-13 and 29-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ni.

The Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of claims 14 and 31 is allowable.

In order to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended the independent claims to incorporate what is believed to be the allowable subject matter of claims 14 and 31. The amended claims do not include the specific implementation of storing the tags in a FIFO, but they do recite means for storing each tag in a memory. The specific use of a FIFO memory, as opposed to any other type of memory, is not believed to be what the Examiner was focusing on in indicating allowable subject matter. In general, the subject matter of claims 2, 12, 13 and 14 has been added to claim 1. Similarly, the general subject matter of claims 23, 29, 30 and 31 has been added to claim 22. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 22 are in immediate condition for allowance, as they contain the subject matter that the Examiner appears to have focused on in indicating that claims 14 and 31 would be allowable. Each of the claims dependent on claims 1 and 22 is also believed to be allowable.

With respect to the Ni reference cited by the Examiner, it is noted that Ni merely discloses prioritizing packet flows within a switching network. This is essentially a sequencing operation, where the packets are prioritized without any disclosure of processing them into something different. To the contrary, Applicants' claimed invention processes the packets after they are

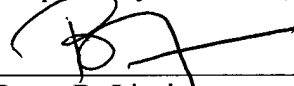
received, and the processing is performed in accordance with the priority of the respective digital stream. Such processing is neither disclosed nor suggested by Ni.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between Applicants' claims and the prior art are not deemed necessary, in view of the amended claims and the foregoing discussion. Applicants' silence as to any of the Examiner's comments is not indicative of an acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Since the subject matter that is incorporated in currently amended claims 1 and 22 has been indicated as being allowable, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment and allow each of the claims.

If there are any remaining issues that need to be addressed in order to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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